

THE VILLAGE VOICE
14 June 1971

NAT HENTOFF

William S. Paley Gets off the CIA Hook

'Schorr pointed out that keeping the heat on CIA-affiliated news employees marvelously serves the interest of management. "Why is everybody after the shnooks and not the bosses?"'

The managements of the New York Times, CBS News and the other redoubts of the Estate have been impudently naming the names of those who, through the coats who, through the pretenses of being abolitionists while tricking for the CIA. Even as a matter of fact, according to the committee report, at least one of domestic news organizations

are still reporting to two masters, one in the shadows. A number of nonmanagement figures, including Walter Cronkite, are also taking up the chase. Until the press is publicly scourged of this blight, they say, we are all suspect.

Yet, a basic part of the story is missing. And Dan Schorr, as usual—even though he's been taken off the air by employers paying their devotion to journalistic independence—has been focusing on that strangely missing element. Speaking at a Newspaper Guild conference in Washington, Schorr pointed out that keeping the heat on CIA-affiliated news employees marvelously serves the interests of management. Why is there no investigative reporting he asked, concerning "the high executives, still unknown," who greased the machinery for the CIA to function inside television and newspaper operations? "Why," as Schorr said later, "is everybody after the shnooks and not the bosses?"

The same question was asked recently, "Off the record, by a source who was long and intimately involved with recruiting and placing spies who type with two fingers. "Within my experience," he says, "in every case in which we had a special arrangement with a reporter, management knew about it."

A case in point: In the early 1950s, the relatively new president of CBS News, Sig Mickelson, had just returned from his first tour of the network's European bases. Summoned to the office of the emperor of CBS, William S. Paley, Mickelson was introduced by Paley to two CIA executives. They were annoyed with the president of CBS News because Mickelson had not made a point of meeting with a

you. He works for us. But he's got to appear to work for you, understand? So give him real assignments, and we'll be greatly appreciative."

Throughout this exchange, William S. Paley had remained in the office. "He didn't say anything," someone who was present has reported, "but he had the air of presiding over it all."

This intriguing incident remained cozily secret until February of this year. CBS's "60 Minutes" had gotten a lead on the story, as part of a piece on broadcast journalists who had been on the CIA payroll. Discovering that the New York Times was also on the case and about to print it, "60 Minutes" handed the story to Dan Schorr who didn't have to wait until Sunday. It was February 10. Schorr, and only Schorr, knew of another story about to explode, and in view of its nature, he was surely not looking for trouble with William S. Paley. Still, you get a lead, you have to follow it all the way.

Schorr called Paley and asked about the meeting which Sig Mickelson had already described to Schorr. No such meeting had ever taken place, said Paley.

Schorr went on the air with what he had, including Paley's name. There was rampant anxiety, among some CBS News personnel, but what the hell, the Times was about to break the same story. CBS had no choice but to go ahead. And when the Times did come out, the story was all there—except for one thing. No mention of Paley. "Why?" a number of Times officials were asked. "We just missed it." How odd to miss an elephant in a bodega. Anyway, later, William Safire had no difficulty finding and